

HEMISPHERIC SECURITY: Responding to the Threats of the 21st Century

Even before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, leaders at the Quebec City Summit recognized that the security challenges confronting the Americas in the 21st century had changed dramatically. The emergence of multidimensional threats ranging from terrorism and HIV/AIDS to organized crime require a more coordinated, cooperative, and multilateral response by all states. At the same time, traditional threats have not disappeared and require renewed vigilance to ensure continued peace and stability in the Americas.

These security threats transcend national borders and exceed any state's ability to address them effectively alone. An effective response to these threats demands closer hemispheric cooperation. The Quebec City Summit provides an agenda for increasing cooperation on security issues.



U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge at the inauguration of the first U.S.-Mexico FAST Lane in El Paso, Texas, December 4, 2003. The FAST program will tighten security and expedite movement of trade across the U.S.-Mexican border. (AP/WWP and U.S. Department of Homeland Security)

The United States is among those leading regional efforts to strengthen hemispheric security through a multilateral process mandated by the Quebec Summit. This process involves government, the private sector, civil society, and the military. By sponsoring conferences, encouraging professional exchange of best practices, and funding education and professional training programs, the U.S. is working with our partners in the hemisphere to ensure stability and security as a foundation for building prosperity.

U.S. ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE HEMISPHERE'S AGENDA

- The U.S. hosted the Summit-mandated **Meeting of Experts on Confidence and Security Building Measures** in February 2003. This meeting, which featured active consultations with civil society, adopted a strong Declaration and an Illustrative List of measures as a basis for active steps by states in the hemisphere trying to overcome historical rivalries, tension, and hostility by building mutual confidence and trust.
- In October 2003, the U.S. actively participated in the Summit-mandated **Special Conference on Security**, where states built on existing frameworks and complemented them with a cooperative hemispheric security approach that will effectively address both traditional and new threats, concerns, and challenges in the region. The product of the Conference, the "Declaration on Security in the Americas," provides a practical guide for resolving interstate border tensions, lowering pressure for arms spending, promoting democratic norms, and fostering a climate of confidence, trust, transparency, and cooperation in our hemisphere.